

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 4 34, wherein the hydrophilic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of cellulose fibers, cotton fibers, rayon fibers, jute, or peat moss.
4. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 4 34, wherein the hydrophilic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of polyurethane foam or cellulose foam.
5. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 4 34 wherein the hydrophobic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of polypropylene fibers, polyethylene fibers, polyester fibers, or hydrophobic bi-component fibers.
6. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 4 34, wherein the hydrophobic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer primarily consists of polyethylene foam.

7. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 4 34 further comprising a liquid-pervious, hydrophobic material layer arranged between the absorbent body and the hydrophilic absorbent material.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 4 34, wherein the hydrophobic material in the liquid-pervious surface layer is constituted of a hydrophilic material which has been rendered hydrophobic.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 4 34, wherein the article comprises a shaping member which, by means of influence from forces which the article is subjected to during use, has an ability to bring the wetting region into contact with the mucous membranes of the user.

14. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 13, wherein the shaping member ~~is comprising~~ comprises compressions or folding notches.

15. (Previously Presented) Absorbent article according to claim 13, wherein the shaping member comprises an insert.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) Absorbent article according to claim 4 34, wherein the wetting region covers at least a portion of the absorbent body.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 46 36, wherein the wetting region covers at least a portion of the absorbent body.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article according to claim 4 34, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 46 36, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

25. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article of claim ~~49~~ 37, wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, panty-liner, or incontinence protector.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~22~~ 38 wherein the absorbent article is a sanitary napkin, a panty-line, or incontinence protector.

27. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article according to claim ~~2~~ 35, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes of the user.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~34~~ 39, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes of the user.

29. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article of claim ~~32~~ 40, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes only of the user.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~33~~ 41, wherein the wetting region contacts only the mucous membranes only of the user.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Canceled)

34. (New) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-pervious user-facing first side including a liquid-pervious surface layer consisting of a hydrophobic material,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the two surface layers,

wherein the first side exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, and which is the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

wherein the wetting region consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist,

an outer edge portion of the wetting region being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the liquid-pervious surface layer situated laterally outwardly of such edge, wherein an extent of the wetting region is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body.

35. (New) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-pervious user-facing first side including a liquid-pervious surface layer consisting of a hydrophobic material,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the two surface layers,
wherein the first side exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, which is the region of the first side intended to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,
wherein the wetting region consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture,
an outer edge portion of the wetting region being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the liquid pervious surface layer situated laterally outwardly of such edge, wherein an extent of the wetting region is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body,
wherein the wetting region is situated on a hump so as to project past the liquid-pervious surface layer.

36. (New) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a user-facing first side which includes a liquid pervious surface layer and a wetting region, the article further including a second side opposite the first side and having a liquid impervious layer, the liquid pervious surface layer formed of a hydrophobic material, the wetting region formed of a hydrophilic absorbent material, the wetting region arranged to be first wetted by body fluid, the absorbent body being disposed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer, an outer edge portion of the wetting region being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the liquid pervious surface layer situated laterally outwardly of such edge wherein an extent of

the wetting region is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the wetting region is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and the wetting region receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region, and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retaining in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region.

37. (New) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-impervious user-facing first side including a liquid-pervious surface layer consisting of a hydrophobic material,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the two surface layers,

wherein the first side exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, and which is the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

wherein the wetting region consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, an outer edge portion of the wetting region being bordered by the hydrophobic

material of the liquid pervious surface layer which is situated laterally outwardly of the wetting region and overlies the absorbent body.

38. (New) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a liquid pervious layer and a wetting region, the article further including a second side opposite the first side and having a liquid impervious layer, the liquid pervious surface layer formed of a hydrophobic material, and the wetting region formed of a hydrophilic absorbent material, the wetting region arranged to be first wetted by body fluid, the absorbent body being disposed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer, an outer edge portion of the wetting region being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the liquid pervious surface layer which is situated laterally outwardly of the wetting region and overlies the absorbent body, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the wetting region is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and the wetting region receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region; and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retained in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region.

39. (New) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a user-facing first side which includes a liquid pervious layer and a wetting region, the article

further including a second side opposite the first side and having a liquid impervious layer, the liquid pervious surface layer formed of a hydrophobic material, and the wetting region formed of a hydrophilic absorbent material, the wetting region arranged to be first wetted by body fluid, the absorbent body being disposed between the liquid pervious layer and the liquid impervious layer, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the wetting region is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and the wetting region receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region; and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retaining in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the wetting region,

wherein an extent of the wetting region is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body; and

wherein the wetting region is situated on a hump so as to project past the liquid-pervious surface layer.

40. (New) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a user-facing first side including a liquid-pervious surface layer consisting of hydrophobic material,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the two surface layers,

wherein the first side exhibits a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, and which is the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

wherein the wetting region consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture, so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, an outer edge portion of the wetting region being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the liquid pervious surface layer which is situated laterally outwardly of the wetting region and overlies the absorbent body,

wherein the wetting region is situated on a hump so as to project past the liquid-pervious surface layer.